

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE A-1

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## 20-Ton Explosives Shipment To Libya Linked to Ex-Agent

The following article is based on reporting by Philip Taubman and Jeff Gerth and was written by Mr. Taubman

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 29 — Twenty tons of plastic explosives were secretly and illegally shipped from the United States to Libya in 1977 for use in the manufacture of bombs for terrorism, in a deal organized by a former agent for the Central Intelligence Agency, according to Federal investigators and participants in the transaction.

These sources said that the deal, which involved financial transactions on three continents and the manufacture of the explosives in Canada and in four states, was consummated when 40,000 pounds of C-4 explosive compound were flown from Houston Intercontinental Airport to Libya in October 1977.

The Federal sources described the shipment as one of the largest illegal movements of explosives ever investigated by the Government. C-4 is a powerful plastic explosive frequently used by the military for demolition work.

The former intelligence agent who made the arrangement, Federal investigators and participants said, was Edwin P. Wilson. In 1976, according to Federal authorities, Mr. Wilson closed a deal with the Libyan leader, Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi, to use his expertise in intelligence, arms and explosives to train terrorists in Libya.

### Explosives Made Into Ashtrays

Mr. Wilson was indicted in 1980 by a Federal grand jury on charges of illegally exporting explosives to Libya in connection with earlier, smaller shipments separate from the 20-ton transaction. Mr. Wilson is now a fugitive, believed to be living in Tripoli, the Libyan capital.

The 20-ton shipment has been under investigation by the Justice and Treasury Departments for more than a year, and officials said that indictments are expected to be handed up by a grand jury here in September.

Arrangements for the shipment, Federal investigators said, began in the summer of 1977. By that time, investiga-

tors said, Mr. Wilson had established facilities outside Tripoli and in Benghazi and Tobruk for the manufacture of bombs for terrorist acts. These devices, made out of the plastic explosive compound, were shaped as ashtrays, attaché cases, coat hangers, rocks and other ostensibly harmless items.

To create the devices and to instruct Libyans in their use, Mr. Wilson hired and brought to Libya a small group of American explosives experts, including several former Army ordnance officers, investigators said. The group also included one former Government ordnance expert who had worked at the White House, on detail to the Secret Service, to handle bomb threats against President Carter. He later became a Government witness.

A partial description of this operation was included in the 1980 indictment of Mr. Wilson and Frank E. Terpil, another former C.I.A. operative who was also charged with illegally shipping explosives to Libya.

### Company on Coast Involved

In July 1977, shortly after the accidental detonation of one device killed three Libyans and wounded two Americans, one seriously, Mr. Wilson initiated discussions with a California explosives manufacturer about obtaining "a shipload" of the C-4 compound, Federal investigators said.

The manufacturer, Jerome S. Brower, was indicted along with Mr. Wilson and Mr. Terpil last year for his involvement in earlier, smaller shipments of explosives to Libya. Mr. Brower, president of J. S. Brower and Associates, an explosives manufacturing and distribution firm in Pomona, Calif., pleaded guilty earlier this year to one count of illegally shipping explosives.

To finance purchase of the C-4 explosives, Mr. Wilson arranged for the transfer of about \$250,000 from the United Bank of Switzerland to an associate of Mr. Brower's, according to Federal investigators.

Inspectors of the United States Customs Service subsequently found the as-

The C-4 manufactured in Canada, New York and California was transported by truck to J. S. Brower and Associates in Pomona, where it was repacked and sent by truck as a single shipment to Houston for final handling and forwarding to Libya, Federal investigators said. They said that the C-4 made in Texas and Louisiana was shipped directly to Houston.

According to two participants in the operation, who asked not to be named, Mr. Wilson turned to a Houston ocean and air freight shipping company he had helped establish for the operation's final and most sensitive stages: the consolidation and packing of the C-4 and shipment of the explosives to Libya.

At the time the company, Aroundworld Shipping and Chartering Inc., had offices in Washington and Houston. The Washington office was at 1425 K Street N.W. in the same suite that housed several other companies operated by Mr. Wilson, according to District of Columbia records.

Mr. Wilson, the two former associates said, did not want to use the company directly. They said he feared that it would be shut down by Federal agencies and possibly charged with criminal activity if the operation was discovered and that he would lose a key link in the chain of American corporations he had helped establish to handle both legitimate and illegitimate business.

### Cargo Company 'Didn't Know'

Instead, the former associates said, Mr. Wilson turned to officers and employees of Aroundworld and instructed them to store, pack and ship the C-4 using outside facilities and cargo handlers. Aroundworld itself was not involved, he reportedly said.

These employees turned to an air freight forwarder in Houston to make specific arrangements, the participants said. The air freight forwarder, in turn, contracted with WITS Air Freight company for storage space near Houston Intercontinental Airport. "WITS didn't know what they were storing," said one man involved in the shipment.

For transportation of the explosives to Libya, Mr. Wilson's men contracted with a small air charter company based in Miami known by the initials JFC, according to the two participants and the Federal investigators. They said the company operated a DC-8 that it used